

Just Perfect by JoMo3

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Summary:

“How do you do a date?”

“I’ve, uh...never actually been on one before.”

or

Mike and Eleven try to see one another as Valentine's Day approaches.

Just Perfect

Author's Note:

Writer's block is a pain in the ass.
This takes place right after the last story, More Than
Like

The sun was starting to set when Hopper returned, the movie finished and Mike and Eleven were sitting at the table, playing cards.

“What’re you two playing?” Hopper asked, shaking the light snow off his boots before closing the door.

“Go Fish,” El explained, shuffling her hand.

“Oh, yeah?” Hopper asked, walking behind El and glancing at her cards. “Well, you might not want Mike to know you’ve got all these three’s here.”

She batted him away, then glanced at Mike.

“Got any three’s?” he asked, hopefully.

She shook her head, causing Mike to groan and Hopper to bark a laugh as he went to the fridge.

“What’d you two do while I was gone?” Hopper asked, taking out a beer.

El’s cheeks colored at that, and she could see Mike react similarly. The two had spent their time watching a movie , which El thought was pretty cool. They’d watched most of the movie *after* Mike had explained what love was, and now they were both caught up in the bliss of having said it to one another.

“Nothing,” Mike said to Hopper. “Watched a movie.”

“Yeah? What’d you bring this time?”

“Time Bandits.”

Hopper shook his head. “Never heard of it.” Taking a swig of his beer, he glanced outside at the darkening woods. “Mike’s going to have to go back pretty soon.”

Eleven and Mike both let out a sigh as they glanced at each other over the table. Not sure of when they would see each other again, they were both reluctant to call it a day.

“Just a little longer?” Eleven asked Hopper.

He shook his head. “If I wait too late, he’s going to end up staying the night here...”

“Okay,” she said, eyes brightening.

“...and that’s not going to happen,” Hopper finished. “Twenty more minutes.”

So the two teens continued their game until Hopper signaled it was time for Mike to go. They reluctantly cleaned up the cards, then Mike collected his backpack from El’s room.

Hopper and El were waiting in the small kitchen when he came out. El gave Hopper a look; he rolled his eyes and went by the door to give she and Mike a *little* privacy to say goodbye.

Once Hopper moved away, Mike and Eleven embraced each other tightly.

“Love you,” he whispered into her ear.

“Love you, too,” she whispered back. Pulling away a little, Mike said, “We’ll talk tomorrow, okay?”

She nodded, her eyes beginning to tear up. “Okay.”

He brought his lips to hers, and the two shared a brief, chaste, kiss. They then reluctantly let go of one another as Mike headed to the door. With one last smile at El, he followed Hopper outside.

The next couple of days were difficult.

Their talks over the radio increased, but it still didn't compare to just being in the same room together.

Eleven moped around the cabin, back to her lonely days of watching soap operas while she waited for Hopper to come home. In an attempt to cheer her up, he bought a vase that she set next to her bed. That way she could look at Mike's roses every night before she slept as well as in the morning when she awoke.

Her nights became restless, though. She would lie awake, trying to come up with some idea of what she could get Mike for Valentine's Day. She'd eventually asked Hopper about it, and now knew that it was on February 14th, a few days away.

But what to get him ? She knew he liked movies and games. But was there one he didn't have she could get? Or should it be something simpler than that? The flowers he'd gotten her were just perfect, and she wanted something like that, *just perfect* . On their now nightly chats she would make an attempt to ask him if there was something he wanted, but he wasn't able to think of anything. Or if he did, it was something she didn't know, and he'd have to explain it to her, and she still didn't understand what it was.

Over the next few days she spent a lot of her time during the day racking her brain for gift ideas, and paying close attention to the ads that came up on TV, hoping something would catch her eye, but nothing ever did.

The day before Valentine's, Jim Hopper came home to a quiet cabin. So quiet, in fact, that if Eleven hadn't unlocked the door he would've thought she'd run off again. Usually when he arrived, the TV would be on, but today it was off, as El sat on the couch clutching her teddy bear, deep in thought.

"Hey, kid," he said after he'd closed the door and taken off his hat. "What's going on?"

“Valentine’s,” she said, finally.

“Yeah. Tomorrow. What about it?”

“Mike.”

Hopper sighed, shaking his head. “What about him?”

“I need to get a gift for him.”

“Okay,” Hopper said, as he sat next to her on the couch. “What’d you have in mind?”

El shrugged her shoulders.

“Well...” Hopper tried to think of something. “Maybe there’s something you can make him? Something he likes?”

She shook her head.

“Is there something you want me to get from the store, and give it to him?”

“I want to see him,” she said, looking up at him with her sad, brown, eyes.

“It isn’t safe, kid.”

She paused, then asked, “Flowers?”

Hopper chuckled. “Boys don’t really *get* flowers, El. They *give* flowers.”

She huffed, frustrated. She couldn’t think of anything perfect enough. She wanted to make Mike happy, as happy as he’d made her, both with the flowers and coming over. She thought back to the night of the Snowball, and the look on his face when he’d spotted her across the gymnasium. A smile came to her lips as an idea emerged.

“Can I see him?”

Hopper had gotten up, starting to warm up dinner. “What?”

“Mike. Can I go and see him?”

“El,” Hopper said, shaking his head as he took out two microwave dinners, “He was just over here. You two aren’t...”

“Compromise?” she asked, walking to the table.

“Unh-unh,” Hopper replied. “You’ve had enough compromises to last you until the summer.”

“What about the Snowball?” she asked.

“What about it?”

“I went and saw Mike at the Snowball.”

Hopper gave her a look as he put the first tray into the microwave. “That was different.”

“*This* is different,” she pleaded.

Hopper sighed, but El thought he seemed to loosen up a little. “I know you want to see him, but we gotta space these things out. I know he’s your friend and all...”

“*Boy* friend,” she corrected.

Hopper rolled his eyes as the microwave chirped. “Yeah. Whatever. But...”

“Promise?”

“What?” he asked as he put the second tray of food into the microwave.

“A promise. I won’t ask for any...Mike-compromises for 30 days. If I can see him.”

Hopper sighed, walking over to the table and putting the food in front of her. “I’ll *think* about it,” he told her.

She smiled, pulling the plastic off her food.

“I didn’t say yes,” Hopper said, noticing her smile. “So wipe that grin off your face.”

He thought it’d be easier.

Mike had known that he wouldn’t be seeing Eleven on Valentine’s Day, which was why he’d saved his allowance to buy the roses for her. He’d enjoyed every minute of their time together that day, content with the fact that he wouldn’t actually get to *see* her on the holiday.

But then he started seeing the pink, white, and red decorations appearing around school, and posters for the upcoming Valentine’s dance. And seeing other seventh graders walking hand in hand, talking about spending time together didn’t help, either.

As the holiday neared, he became more and more withdrawn, turning down going to the Palace with his friends or refusing to work on homework with them, preferring the quiet solitude of his basement.

When the day finally came, he woke up in a sour mood. It was the first Valentine’s Day that he not only had a girlfriend, but a girlfriend that he *loved*, and he knew he wouldn’t be seeing her. Part of him was hoping that El would suddenly show up like she did at the Snowball; as he made his way to school, every brown-haired girl whose face he couldn’t quite make out became a possible Eleven. By the time he’d gone through his first three classes, he’d given up, and was back to his withdrawn self.

He sat through lunch and tried not to get *too* upset over seeing other boys sitting with their girlfriends or crushes. As he spotted Lucas and Max heading to the table, he tried not to be jealous of how Lucas got to spend the day with his sort of girlfriend (the two still hadn’t defined their relationship), while Mike’s girlfriend was away in a cabin, unavailable to the boy who loved her.

“I don’t want you to come over,” Lucas was saying to Max, as they sat

across from Mike.

“Why? Are you embarrassed or something, stalker?” Max snapped back.

Lucas gave her a look. “Erica’s just gonna bother us.”

“What’re you guys talking about?” Dustin, to Mike’s right, asked.

Sighing, Lucas explained, “Me and Max are gonna watch a movie tonight.”

“Only he doesn’t want me to come over to his house,” she added.

“I told you, my sister’s gonna annoy us,” Lucas pleaded. “Why can’t we just watch it at your house?”

“Um, have you *met* my brother?” Max asked.

“You want to borrow Steve’s bat again?” Dustin asked with a smile.

“Why don’t you guys just wait until tomorrow, and see that movie that’s coming out,” Will, sitting next to Dustin, suggested. “The....something club. What’s it called?”

“Breakfast Club?” Lucas asked, making a face. “Ew. Isn’t that a romance movie?” Will shrugged.

“No, we were gonna watch Ghostbusters,” Lucas clarified. “Can you believe she hasn’t seen it?”

“Oh my gosh, really?” Dustin asked, his voice cracking. “Where’ve you been for the past year?”

“It looked stupid, but stalker here says it’s good,” Max replied.

“It is good,” Lucas said. “You’re gonna love it.”

“Whatever,” Max said, finishing off her sandwich.

Lucas sighed. “Look, if you want to watch it at my house, we can watch it there. I can ignore my sister. I just...I want to do something with you, okay?”

Mike could see Max's cheeks turn a light shade of red. "Okay," she said, trying to act nonchalant, tucking a stray strand of hair behind her ear. She glanced at her watch. "Dammit. I've got to go." She began gathering her trash. "I forgot my book in my locker, I'm gonna be late to fourth period if I don't go get it now."

"I'll walk with you," Lucas said, grabbing his trash as well. "Bye guys," he said over his shoulder as he followed Max.

Mike rolled his eyes. "Can you believe him?"

"What do you mean?" Will asked.

"He does anything she wants him to. It's like she's got him wrapped around her finger."

"And Eleven doesn't have *you* wrapped around *hers*?" Dustin asked.

"What? I... *no*," Mike said, feeling his cheeks heat up.

"Yeah, right," Dustin said, smiling his signature smile.

"Shut up, Dustin," Mike said.

The bell rang, signaling the end of lunch. The remaining three boys gathered their garbage and walked it to the trash cans. On their way out of the lunchroom, Dustin and Will caught up with Mike.

"You know, you don't have to be a dick," Dustin said.

"I'm *not*," Mike said.

"You kinda are," Will said.

Mike stopped and let out a sigh. "It's just...it's not fair," he said quietly.

"What isn't?" asked Will.

Tapping his foot, Mike said, "That Lucas can see Max and I can't see El."

"Got a little girlfriend jealousy going on, huh?" Dustin asked.

“No, just...I wanted to see her today,” Mike said, his eyes on the ground. “I saw her a week ago, but I was hoping for something today.”

“Well, it’s been a couple of days, right?” Dustin asked, putting a hand on Mike’s shoulder. “So you gotta be seeing her soon.”

“It’s only been a week,” Mike said. “And Hopper...he’s really adamant about me not going over so much. I don’t know when the next time’ll be.”

The group was silent for a beat, and Dustin took his hand off Mike’s shoulder.

“Why don’t you guys come over today?” Will asked. “We can play my Atari or something.”

“And watch Star Wars!” Dustin added.

“I don’t know,” Mike said.

“Come on, you’ll still get a chance to call El on the walkie.”

“Maybe. I’ll think about it.”

But as the day went on, he felt less and less like joining Will and Dustin. When the final bell rang, and he saw Lucas and Max walking out of the building together, that cinched it. He just wanted to go home.

He told Will and Dustin that he wasn’t feeling well-which was partially true, therefore not breaking the group’s “friends don’t lie” rule-and biked home. With his mother and father doing one of their yearly dates, Nancy out with Jonathan, and Holly staying at a neighbor’s, he had the house to himself. His mom had left a plate of chicken for him, but he left it, not hungry.

He spent some time in the basement, writing a rough draft for his lit class, then wrote notes for a campaign he was hoping to do soon. He kept glancing at his Supercom, ready to pick it up and have some

semblance of a Valentine's Day with El, but decided he would wait until their normal time.

He had been home an hour when the walkie crackled, and he heard Dustin's voice say, "Hey, Mike, you there?"

He thought about not answering it, but figured if he did, Dustin would just keep on calling. Getting up from the couch, he picked it up and clicked. "What, Dustin?"

"Hey. Are you home?"

"Yeah...where else would I be?"

"Will and I are coming over."

"What? No. I said I wasn't feeling good."

"Too bad, man, we're almost there. Over and out."

Mike groaned, not feeling like having company. Besides, he needed to call El pretty soon. As much as he loved his friends, he wanted to carve out some time for her tonight.

Fine , he thought to himself. *But only for an hour* .

When the doorbell rang about twenty minutes later, he dutifully walked upstairs. Turning the knob, he said, "Alright, guys, you can come in, but..." and he stopped.

There, standing on the other side of the door smiling her shy smile at him, was Eleven.

"El? What...what're you doing here?" He asked, flabbergasted. Behind her, he noticed Dustin and Will on their bikes in the driveway.

"Valentine's," she explained.

"Yeah, but...does...does Hopper know you're here?"

She shook her head, a mischievous smile on her face. "Secret."

"But El, I..." he sighed, not believing he was about to decline her

visit. "I don't want you to get in trouble."

She frowned. "I won't be."

"But..."

"Really?" Dustin called, deciding to come over. "You've been moping around all week and you're about to say no?"

"Hopper let me visit," El told Mike, "He left me with the Byers."

"And we brought her over here," Will said, walking over as well.

"She's gotta be back by eight," Dustin said. "So you want to bring her back before then."

"Wait, wha...you guys are leaving?" Mike asked.

"Four's a crowd," Dustin said, turning his bike. "We'll be at Will's." Then, looking over his shoulder, said "Don't do anything I wouldn't do." Mike turned scarlet.

"Happy Valentine's Day," Will called as he and Dustin rode down the driveway.

Mike turned to look at Eleven, and, despite the cold February air, felt warmth spread through his body. The two smiled at each other, and it didn't take long for them to wrap one another in a hug.

"I'm so glad to see you," he told her.

"Me too," she said back. Unwrapping one another, Mike took El's hand and led her inside, closing the door behind them.

Still in disbelief, he shook his head, smiling, and said "I still can't believe you're here. I thought I wasn't going to see you."

She smiled back, and walked closer, bringing her lips to his. "I made you a card," she said quietly, pulling away. She dug in a pocket, and pulled out a folded piece of paper and handed it to him.

He took it from her, and unfolded it; it was a homemade card. On the

front were stick figure drawings, one with curly hair and one with black hair. The two were holding hands. Opening it, he saw inside were the words “Happy Valentine’s Day” and “Love, Eleven.” He looked at her, and couldn’t hide his smile or the blush that had made its way to his face.

“Is it okay?” she asked shyly.

“It’s perfect, El, I love it,” he said, giving her a quick peck. “Thank you.”

The two went to the couch and sat down together. “I didn’t know what to get,” El admitted.

“This is great, El,” Mike said, nodding to the card he’d propped up on the coffee table. “And besides, all I really wanted was to see *you* . I feel kind of bad, I’ve been kind of a jerk to everyone.”

She scrunched her eyebrows. “Why?”

“Well, I...I really missed you, El. And I missed you so much that I was kind of rude to Lucas and Max. And I’ve been avoiding Will and Dustin.” He shook his head. “I can’t believe they did this.”

He noticed El looking around the living room, and noticing its emptiness. “Everyone’s gone,” he explained.

“Gone?”

“Somewhere else,” he clarified. “Nancy’s with Jonathan, Holly’s at a sitter’s. And my parents are on a date.”

“What’s a date?”

“Um, well, it’s...when two people who like each other, whether they’re married or boyfriend or girlfriend, go out together somewhere and do something special.”

“Oh.” Then, she asked, “Can we go on a date?”

He smiled, and nodded his head. “Absolutely.”

“When it’s safe?”

“Well...you don’t always have to go *out* to have a date,” he said, “How about we make *this* a date?”

She smiled, liking the idea. “How do you do a date?”

Mike shrugged. “I’ve, uh...never actually been on one before. But I guess you can do whatever you want; is there anything you want to do?”

She wanted Eggo’s, of course, and luckily the Wheelers had some in the freezer. She ate waffles while Mike ate the leftover chicken. They talked about their day, Mike telling her about the happenings at Hawkins Middle School, and El told him how she’d finally gotten Hopper to agree to let her visit him. Mike took that as a sign that Hopper was warming up to him.

After dinner they settled on the couch, Mike wrapping a blanket over the two of them as he put his *Star Wars* VHS into the VCR, having wanted to watch it with her for a long time. The scrolling words at the beginning went too fast for El, so Mike read them to her as the words moved up the screen.

Eleven enjoyed the movie more than she thought she would. She liked the sounds of the weapons (lightsabers, Mike called them) when people fought. She didn’t like the guy in black, Darth Vader, she thought he was too mean. She thought Leia was pretty, and Luke reminded her of Mike.

What she enjoyed the most, though, was being snuggled next to Mike as the movie played, feeling his chest rise and fall as he breathed, and the excitement in his voice as he would describe what was happening. Their hands, at first just touching, eventually found each other’s, and around halfway through the movie they held hands and stayed that way until the end.

When the movie was finished, Mike turned to her, a look of eagerness on his face. “Did you like it?”

She nodded. "It was cool."

"There's more," he said, "Empire Strikes Back, and Return of the Jedi. Maybe some other time we can watch them."

"Our next date?" she asked.

"Yeah," he said, nodding. He glanced at his watch; it was a little past seven-thirty. "We've got to go," he said, sadly. Then, added, "I'm sorry if I was a jerk."

She looked confused. "Jerk?"

"We didn't do anything that you wanted, El,"

"All I wanted was to see you," she said with a shy smile.

Mike returned the smile, then brought his face close as the two shared a kiss. She cupped his cheek as she kissed him back.

Breaking the kiss, their faces remained close as he stroked her curly hair. "I promise, on the next date, we'll do something *you* want, okay?"

She smiled, and gave him a quick kiss. "Okay."

As much as they didn't want the night to end, they both knew it had to before Hopper got to the Byers and before Mike's parents returned home. Despite that, though, their first date was something neither one of them would change.

Author's Note:

I can't believe it's been nearly a year since I started writing these stories. Thank you for reading these and helping me to enjoy writing again.

I think I've got about 2 more parts in this series. I love comments if you'd like to leave them. Happy Holidays.